

Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter

• 216 N. Main Street • Belmont, NC 28012 •

Ash Wednesday

March 2nd, 2022



WELCOME/GATHERING

PRELUDE: *I've Been In The Storm So Long* Chamber Choir

INVITATION TO LENT

Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance as we begin our journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. As we hear in today's readings, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During Lent the people of God will reflect on the meaning of their baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. The sign of ashes suggests our human mortality and frailty. What seems like an ending is really an invitation to make each day a new beginning, in which we are washed in God's mercy and forgiveness. With the cross on our brow, we long for the spiritual renewal that flows from the springtime Easter feast to come.

PROCESSION: *Bless the Lord My Soul* Church Choir sings 1st,
Congregation repeats

Bless the Lord My Soul

And Bless His Holy name.

Bless the Lord My Soul,

He Rescues me from death...

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P In the name of God, who makes a way in the wilderness, walks with us, and guides us in our pilgrimage.

C Amen.

Silence is kept for reflection.

C Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.

P For self-centered living,
and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness:

C **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

P For longing to have what is not ours,
and for hearts that are not at rest with ourselves:

C **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

P For misuse of human relationships,
and for unwillingness to see the image of God in others:

C **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

P For jealousies that divide families and nations,
And for rivalries that create strife and warfare:

C **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

P For reluctance in sharing the gifts of God,
and for carelessness with the fruits of creation:

C **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

P For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ,
and for squandering the gifts of love and grace:

C **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. Through the Holy Spirit God cleanses us and gives us the power to proclaim the mighty acts of the one who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

*People may come forward to receive the ashes.
Ministers mark the forehead of each person with a cross of ashes, saying:*

P Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

*After those who desire ashes have received them,
all may kneel or sit and the minister continues.*



P Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

C that we may show forth your glory in the world.

P By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

C bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

P Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

C Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

FIRST READING

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

A reading from the second chapter of Joel.

Because of the coming Day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community reminds God of his gracious character and asks God to spare the people, lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion;

sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,

for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—

²a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like blackness spread upon the mountains
a great and powerful army comes;
their like has never been from of old,
nor will be again after them
in ages to come.

¹²Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing.

Return to the Lord, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the Lord, your God?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sanctify a fast;

call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶gather the people.

Sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged;

gather the children,
even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room,
and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar
let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord,
and do not make your heritage a mockery,
a byword among the nations.

Why should it be said among the peoples,
'Where is their God?' "

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

A reading from the fifth and sixth chapters of 2 Corinthians.

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

Chapter 5

²⁰We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Chapter 6

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

²For he says,

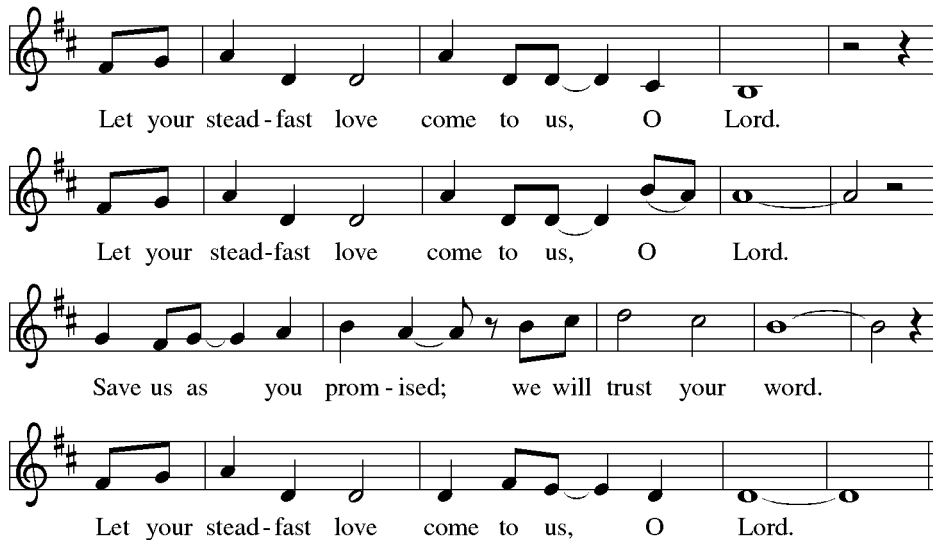
"At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see — we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

GOSPEL

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixth chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received

their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

P The Gospel of the Lord.
C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON Deacon Beka

Silence is Kept for Reflection.

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church...* All Stand & Sing



1 E - ter - nal Lord of love, be - hold your church
 2 So dai - ly dy - ing to the way of self,
 3 If dead in you, so in you we a - rise,



walk - ing once more the pil - grim way of Lent,
 so dai - ly liv - ing in your way of love,
 you the first - born of all the faith - ful dead;



led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,
 we walk the road, Lord Je - sus, that you trod,
 and as through ston - y ground the green shoots break,



moved by your love and toward your pres - ence bent:
 know - ing our - selves bap - tized in - to your death:
 glo - rious in spring - time dress of leaf and flow'r,



far off yet here— the goal of all de - sire.
 so we are dead and live with you in God.
 so in - to life and glo - ry shall we wake.

Text: Thomas H. Cain, 1931–2003

Music: OLD 124TH, *Trente quatre psaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

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THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Renew your church, O God. When we have drifted from our call to proclaim repentance and to guide your people toward justice, lead us back to you. Encourage believers who hold the church's doors open to those who have felt excluded. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew your creation, O God. Transform parched places into watered gardens and preserve every creature that awaits the arrival of spring. Turn each of us from practices of environmental exploitation to become responsible stewards of all you have made. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew our civic life, O God. Teach those in authority to advocate for the liberation of all who are oppressed and grant them courage to make difficult decisions. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew our lives, O God. Spare your people from diseases of the body, mind, or spirit and send healing to those overcome by illness or grief. Restore to us the joy of your salvation. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Renew this congregation, O God. During these forty days of Lent, confirm our sense of mission and expand our imagination for ministry. Deepen our faith, increase our love, and draw us into your unfolding work of healing and restoration. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

As we mark ashes on our foreheads, we give you praise, O God, for all the saints who died and yet are alive with you. Receive us with them into your eternal embrace. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Accept the prayers we bring, O God, on behalf of a world in need, for the sake of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM: *As The Winter Days Grow Longer* Choir vs 1 & 2
All vs 3



1 As the win - ter days grow long - er, draw - ing short the hours of night;
2 As the vines burst in - to blos - som, fra - grant in the morn - ing air,
3 As we jour - ney through this sea - son, pil - grims through a thirst - y land,



as our ea - ger ex - pec - ta - tion waits for Eas - ter's dawn - ing light—
lift - ing spir - its with their sweet - ness, lur - ing hearts to thank - ful prayer—
quench us with your liv - ing pres - ence; guide us with your lov - ing hand.



yearn - ing peo - ple, here we gath - er, turn - ing watch - ful eyes to you:
Lent - en peo - ple, here we gath - er, seek - ing lives re - freshed from sin.
Wan - d'ring peo - ple, here we gath - er, called to rest a - long our way.



God who bless - es earth with spring - time, shine with - in our world a - new!
God who bless - es earth with spring - time, bloom with - in our hearts a - gain!
God who bless - es earth with spring - time, grant us sab - bath joy this day!

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: SUO GÂN, Welsh melody

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OFFERING PRAYER

P Let us pray.

C Extravagant God, you have blessed us with the fullness of creation. Now we gather at your feast where you offer us the food that satisfies. Take and use what we offer here, come among us, and feed us with the body and blood of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

DIALOGUE

The presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE: *“we praise your name and join their unending hymn:”*

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

The first system of musical notation for the Sanctus. It consists of a treble and a bass staff, both in B-flat major (two flats). The treble staff has a key signature of two flats and a common time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The lyrics "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might," are written below the treble staff. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,

The second system of musical notation for the Sanctus. It continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. The lyrics "ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might," are written below the treble staff. The notation is consistent with the first system, using a treble and bass staff in B-flat major.

heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.

Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

As we proclaim the mystery of faith:



We praise you O God blessed and Holy Trinity, now and forever:



LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those

who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

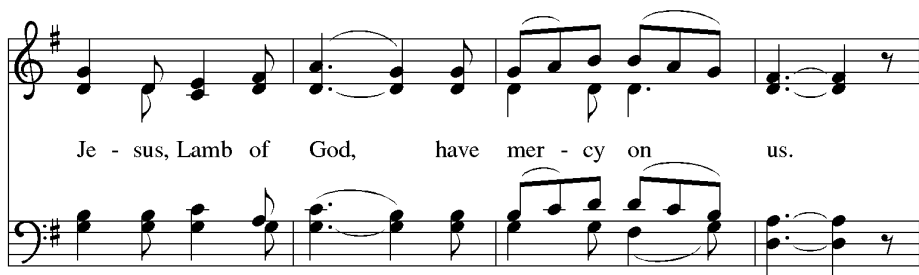


INVITATION TO COMMUNION


P Here is food and drink for the journey. Take and be filled.

C Thanks be to God.

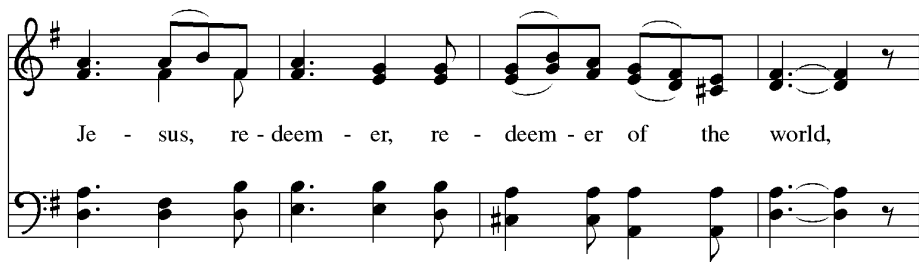
The assembly is seated.



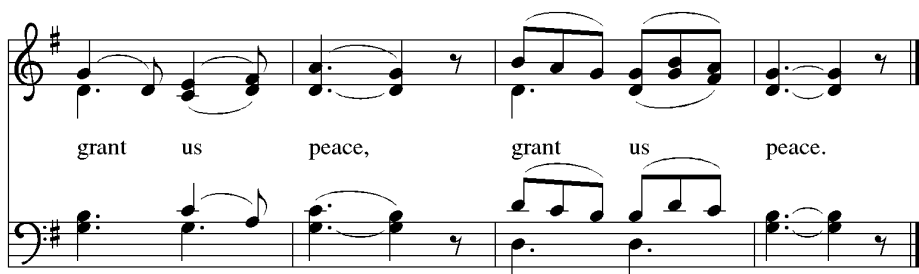
Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us.



Je - sus, bear - er of our sins, have mer - cy on us.



Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world,



grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION

During communion the congregation will be invited forward by rows, starting in the back, and will receive the bread and wine at the front of the aisle. You will then return to your seat where you may briefly remove your mask to eat and drink, and then quickly replace it. Your cups may be placed in the small receptacle on the aisle side of each pew.

COMMUNION BLESSING

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

A Compassionate God,

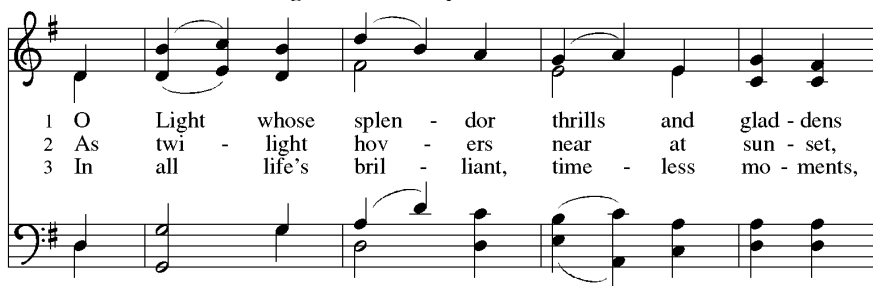
C Blessed Jesus, in this rich meal of grace, you have fed us with your body, the bread of life. Now send us forth to bear your life-giving hope to a world in need. Amen.

BLESSING

P You are children of God, anointed with the oil of gladness and strengthened for the journey. Almighty God, motherly, majestic, and mighty, ✠ bless you this day and always.

C Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: *O Light Whose Splendor Thrills* All Stand & Sing



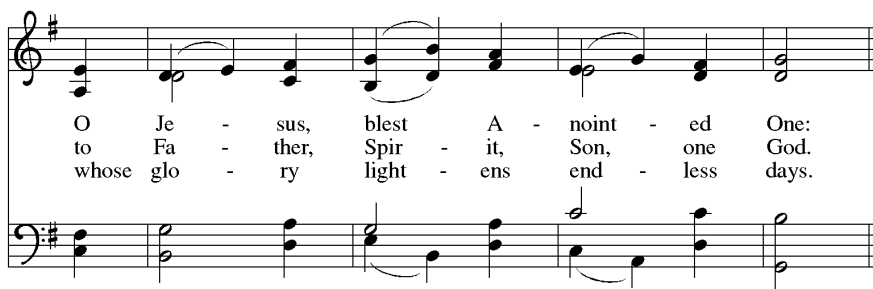
1 O Light whose splen - dor thrills and glad - dens
2 As twi - light hov - ers near at sun - set,
3 In all life's bril - liant, time - less mo - ments,



with ra - diance bright - er than the sun,
and lamps are lit, and chil - dren nod,
let faith - ful voice - es sing your praise,



pure gleam of God's un - end - ing glo - ry,
in eve - ning hymns we lift our voice - es
O Son of God, our life - be - stow - er,



O Je - sus, blest A - noint - ed One:
to Fa - ther, Spir - it, Son, one God.
whose glo - ry light - ens end - less days.

Text: Greek hymn, 3rd cent.; para. Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944
Music: ST. CLEMENT, Clement C. Scholefield, 1839-1904
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DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.



Holy Comforter Lutheran Church

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Church Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 2:00 pm

Micah Kearney, Pastor - email: mkearney@holyc.org

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Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster

Sandra Askey, Office Manager